

Effective schools and educational settings for pupils with autism:

Views from professionals working in education

(Analysed and compiled by Damian Milton and Katerina Giannadou)

Note on the sample:

Professionals working in the field of autism completed a brief form to give information on what they considered to be important in the education of pupils with autism. These responses were used in the development of the Standards. A total of 95 professionals completed the survey.

Theme: Individual pupil

- Suitably trained staff
- Training regularly updated
- Take account of the individual pupil
- School aware of verbal processing difficulties and adjust accordingly
- Knowledge of the individual pupil
- Staff adjusting to individual pupil
- Being updated on best practice
- Setting considers individuality and avoids making generalisations about the way the pupil presents

Theme: Building relationships

- Involving and supporting parents
- Engaging pupil in decision making
- Peer training
- Support given to parents and carers
- Working with wider staff (e.g. lunchtime supervisors)
- Enhancing autism awareness
- Having a Lead Practitioner for autism in the school
- Support and training given to parents and carers
- Consultation with pupil

- Buddy groups
- Funding for professionals to work with and support families
- Pupils encouraged to express their feelings to adults

Theme: Curriculum and learning

- Differentiation
- Visual timetables
- Adult mentors
- Autism specific curriculum
- Willingness to adapt practice
- Positive behaviour support
- Consistent use of methods
- Encourages independence and less reliance on teaching assistants
- Social skills and emotional intelligence or understanding
- Structured curriculum
- Takes account of social interaction issues
- Consistency in support
- Personalised curriculum
- Intensive Interaction
- OT support
- Building trusting relationships
- Person-centred annual reviews
- Visual timetables
- Independence training
- Optimising pupil contributions
- Structured language support
- Clear instructions given
- Trusted mentors in school
- Access to therapeutic support
- Consistent use of visual aids, structure, and routines
- Opportunities for pupil choice

- Opportunities to be with mainstream pupils
- Encourages calm social interaction
- Curriculum reflects pupil's interests and talents
- Prepared for adult life

Theme: Enabling environments

- Support in unstructured times
- Quiet and safe spaces
- Flexibility in timetabling
- Specific work areas and colour schemes
- Sensory room
- Taking into account sensory needs
- Augmented communication
- Adequate equipment in quiet areas
- Specific work areas
- Alternative provision given at break times
- Relaxing start to the school day
- Pupils made aware of availability of support
- Notice given for changes to routine
- Reducing stress